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**Attacks by the Dutch on the Virginia Fleet in Hampton
Roads in 1667.**

[FROM THE WINDER TRANSCRIPTS OF ENGLISH PUBLIC RECORDS
IN VIRGINIA STATE LIBRARY.]

[The years from 1665 to 1667 were a period of disgrace and disaster alike to England and the Colonies. The war with Holland, springing out of some petty commercial disputes, began in the former year, and in that and the next year, though all of the battles at sea (to which the fighting was confined) were closely contested, the general result was in favor of England; but in 1667 the utter incompetence and profligacy of the government paralyzed even the means of defensive warfare, and the Dutch fleet appeared at the Nore, advanced unopposed up the Thames to Gravesend, forced the boom which protected the Medway, and burnt three men-of-war in that river, including the vessel which had brought Charles to England at the Restoration, and withdrew, to remain for weeks masters of the Channel and to keep the Thames closely blockaded. Green, the historian, says: "The thunder of the Dutch guns in the Medway and the Thames woke England to a better sense of its degradation. The dream of loyalty was over." It may be that the same effect was produced in Virginia by the success of the Dutch fleet in Hampton Roads, and that the loyalty which had characterized the Colony was changed to a feeling which made Bacon's Rebellion possible nine years later. It is rather a curious coincidence that this period, which included, among other distresses, the plague and fire in London, also included the most violent and destructive tempest ever known in Virginia.]

Right Honor^{ble}

I hope long ere this Coll. Moryson has done mee right in the delivery of my two letters addressed to your Lord^{sh} w^{ch} were to give you my most humble thanks for your favors and to p^r-sent you wth such a description of this Governmt as the condicon I was then in would permit me to wright. I have since used my best endeavors to procure your honour, a mapp of this unhappy Country & am att last promised one from Maryland, but how long it may be before I may have it I cannot say. I have since written to yo^r Lord^{sh} by Capt. Groom & Capt. Gillam the first to give your Lord^{sh} an acco^t of the then state of ye Country and the last to inform yo^r Honour of the time the fleet in these Colonies was to sayle from hense & where they would waight for a Convoy into safety, but my Lord I never had so much occasion to wright nor was I ever so unfitt for it being allmost distracted wth grief for the misfortune fall'n on us by an attempt made by the dutch in fower men of warr of 33, 34, 24, & 18 gunns and a Doggeboate of 8 gunns who on the first of June took a ship of London of 20 gunns bound from Tangier hither. Conaway the Master fought them all 2 hours killed them 7 & wounded 12 men, but being wounded himself and oppressed wth men he yielded about 5 or 6 leagues wthout the Cape, that day they took a shallop bound from hense to Cape fere by whose men they informed themselves of the condicon of the merchant ships in this Country that there were about 20 sayle of them riding in the mouth of James River & that 3 leagues above them there lay one of the Kings shippes of 46 gunns, but unable to keep the sea for want of a mast and being leaky and short of provisions, upon w^{ch} advice they anchored under the Cape & lay still Sunday & Monday to fitt theire dogger & the shallop they had taken for fire vessells to burne the frigatt, w^{ch} being donne they weighed the 4th day and stood into the Bay when they anchored again till the 5th in the morning when wth a fayre easterly wind and English colours they came up to the Merch^t shippes, and having many English Scotts & Irish on board they hayled them in English & sang theire soundings in English, but many of the Merch^t shippes too late suspecting them let slip theire cables and stood up wth them to the frigat upon w^{ch} whilst 2 of them fires theire broad sides and wthout any resistance made themselves masters

of her, there not being above 30 men in her wthout an officer who were all as the Capt. says on the shore very busily employed on the frigatts severall occasions for the speedier puting her in a condicon to go of to the Cape, the other dutch shipp^s chased and tooke most of the Merch^t shipp^s, wth misfortune is the more grievous because the gunns &c. being on board the frigat not above 5 days before she was lost and then see her in such a forwardnesse as we believe by the 10th she would have been red^dy for her & our defense. I am not seaman enough to judge whether shee might have been sooner fitted, shee being but just a month in the country before she was taken, and had been at first brought higher in the River had not the place shee rode in been the most convenient for taking in her new mast and nearer her station for our defense wth was that she was designed for; undoubtedly severall of the merch^t men might have saved themselves by running into Eliz: River or Nancemond where we had many shipp^s wthin 3 leagues of the enemy who durst not engage them in those small rivers; the dutch being thus posses'd of the frigatt & merch^t shipp^s about 24 houres they burnt 5 or 6 of them, and the frigatt either because they found her out of repayre or for want of her sayles (wth is most probable) hers being all on shore to be mended where they durst not goe to fetch them, they tooke none of her gunns, nor little ells out of her, and soe to our unspeakable grief the King lost his shipp, and wee the security wee hoped from her. I confesse I was extreemly Joyd at the news that his Ma^{ty} was graciously pleased to comand one of his shipp^s hither, but when I saw the condition shee came in I heartily wished her safe att home againe, soe unfortunate are wee often in our desires that what wee hope for as our cheifest good procures our greatest harme, pauci dignosciere vera bona, for had not this frigatt come in so bruised & maimed by storms she had undoubtedly prevented all our losse, for then those enemies shipp^s would never have adventured upon us defended by a shipp of that countenance especially they being all loaden wth spoyle taken in the West Indies that they could not long have prevented either sink- or yielding, or had not the masters of those shipp^s wth were taken wth her been too confident of her protection they would undoubtedly have applyed themselves to the Govn^r who would have commanded them all to James towne, where the enemy

would have had too hard a task to fetch them off; having thus farr related our misfortunes I shall wth yo^r Honors favor informe you what wee did & would have done for our reparation both in losse of reputacion w^{ch} was that upon the first advice w^{ch} the Govo^r received of this unhappy accident he pr[']sently sent for me and I soon waighted on him and upon a short consultacon we resolved to mann out a fleet from Yorke river being nearest to the enemy & hasten to them & fight them, in order whereunto I went to Yorke, had all the masters before mee, showed them the Govo^r orders & resolves and required their speedy answer, w^{ch} was not possitively negative but soe full of difficulties, that I plainly saw they would doe nothing unlesse the Govn^r was pr[']sent (who was then busy at James towne giving orders for the defense of that place & the shippes att & above it). I therefore pr[']sently advertised him that (though before my comeing to Yorke the masters were soe forward as to want nothing but his orders to goe & fight the dutch) yet when they saw it would come to earnest they grew very cold, upon w^{ch} advice he came the next morning to them (whither were alreddy drawn fowre regiments of foot reddey to embarque for that service) required their assistance in that necessity to w^{ch} they replyd that they could not answer it to their merch^{ts} and owners if they voluntarily brought their shippes & goods into hazard, and therefore desired they might be pressed into the Kings service and have security given them for all damages they might receive from the enemy, whereupon the Govn^r commanded an officer pr[']sently to put the broad arrow upon the masts of 9 better shippes then any the enemy had (except the first prize conaway) and had them appraysed by the masters themselves and obliged his Ma^{ty} and himself in the same of ye appraysement to save them their owners & merch^{ts} harmelesse, secured the seamen of provision if they were maimed and promised them all the plunder, upon this (w^{ch} I am confident they hoped & believed would never be graunted) they went to clearing their shippes and wee in the mean time ordered three shippes more in James river of 36, 22 & 20 gunns and in them & shallops to attend them above six hundred men to be reddey for our assistance; wee pressed all seamen (then out of service) to serve in the Yorke fleet except the frigatts men who wth their Capt. very reddily offered themselves, and * * of

them and souldiers reddey to put on board above a thousand besides their * * own, and took all the ordnance out of those shippes w^{ch} were to stay and put them into that fleet and that w^{ch} would have been their greatest incitement to this brave action was that the Govn^r (ag^t the prayers & protestations of as many of the Councill as were pr[']sent) resolved to lead them to victory and accordingly went on board the Admirall accompanied by myself & 4 more of the Councill and above 40 Gen^l, and all this to fight wth 5 enemy shippes manned wth but 400 men and boys and many of them sick, but my Lord howeasoever the victory seemed by reason of our advantages both of shippes and men, yet cowardly feare being never secure where there appears the least danger, was I believe the only why in three days (doe what wee could) wee were not able to get our fleet out, but every howe new difficulties objected, and when they saw the Govn^r stopd at nothing that might satisfie them they in vain endeavored to discourage our souldiers who expressed as much cheerfulness * & Countries service and as much affection to their Gen^l as ever men did, and thus by delays the enemy after six days stay in James River sayled of wth three prizes and wthout a blow, to the shame of our seamen; the enemy wanted water and made severall attempts upon the shore for it, but were not suffered to take any nor ought else from the land, and here it was my Lord, that our unhappy condicon appeared to the Govn^r & me armed wth our owne terrible apprehensions of his Ma^{ties}, yo^r Lord^{sh}s, and all the greates Ministers displeasures of w^{ch} wee were not too sensible whilst they were allayed by our hopes of revenge on the enemy, and our beleife that we held a certaine and brave victory in our hands did as it were, assure us of a pardon for our misfortune w^{ch} is all wee can, and humbly hope his Ma^{tie} & your Lord^p will excuse us of, for though it be certaine that losses of this nature are more easily pr[']vented then repaired, yet doe we unhappily find from our late experience that it was not in our power to doe whilst we met wth such concurrent accidents to pr[']vent our endeavors after wee had donn all wee could for our security, by representing our conditon att home and using all diligence in our power here, both in the one & the other, in the pr[']vention or reparacon of our losse, but because wee doubt not but the owners and masters of the shippes best to excuse their neglects will load this

governm^t wth reproachfull accusations we shall humbly begg that they may not be beleived, nor wee condemned, but according to the meritts of our cause first well examined; as many of their objections as I have yet heard, I shall answer first they say that if a fort had been built at Poynt Comfort, it had prevented this mischeife, to w^{ch} I say that if it had been built there it would not in likelihood have done it, because that shippes wth English Colours and English speech to in a time when wee dayly expected shippes in from the sea, and from all parts of the bay might have deceived any officer of a fort, as well as they did so many masters of shippes and being once passed might have donn all the mischeife they did wth the only hazard of being shot at coming out w^{ch} by English experience (who have beaten down castles wth their shippes) is a matter of noe great difficulty; it was mine opinion in my last yeares letter and soe it is still, the whole countries as well as mine that a fort is no certain security to shippes but where either they can hall on shore under it or the difficulty of the channel shall give those in it time to fire their gunns often upon an enemy before he can passe, and if this be graunted, and that place having neither of those advantages, then I humbly hope it will be by his ma^{ty} and his most hono^{ble} councill thought more reasonably that a few shippes trading into the lower parts of James river or other shippes coming thither for company should be at the trouble of coming up to the towne, then that this country (pressed at their backs wth the Indians and in their bowells wth poverty brought on them by the hard dealing of those whom they are bound to defend and invaded by the dutch) should wth almost insuperable difficulties and charges build and defend a fort in a place w^{ch} can be of no certain security to them; however that it may appeare, wee would willingly doe all wee can. It is ordered that 8 gunns be mounted there in an open battery till we can secure it round wth what speed wee can, but wth this humble desire that all shippes coming into James River may be ordered to ride at James towne where wee can only wth reason pr'mise them security; but my lord supposing that James river were soe fortyfied as an enemy could not come into it, this were no security for those many & distant parts in this Colony w^{ch} are not in our power to fortyfy, and if they were, wee had in this country but 14 gunns, and many of them very small and be-

lieved unserviceable by being much scald and honeycombed, till his ma^{tie} was pleased to send us ten wth were as soon mounted as received att towne where wee intend to mount 12 more, being very unfortunately supplied wth gunns & shot out of the last frigatt; and if those parts shall be left open, either the shippes trading thither must be forced to ride in James River, wth will make the freight of all the remoter to^{be} so deare that at the rate it now beares in the world will not repay it, and thereby that part of the country will be left wthout supplies, and the King will loose his customes y^t if they shall still be suffered to trade in unfortyfyed places wee must (so long as the ware shall last) be every yeare exposed to the like losse, both in shippes and reputation. These difficulties, my lord, are only in the defence of shippes, for wee place not our security in forts, nor doe wee feare much for ourselves whom they cannot injure but on land, and if it comes to that wee shall undoubtedly make them buy whatever they get from us at too deare a rate to sell it again to any profit, nor doe I know any pr[']sent way of removing these difficulties but by guarding our coasts from such hostile attempts, but his ma^{tie} (to our extreme grieve) hath had such ill successe in his first designe of that nature that wee are afraid (how considerable soever the customs of the country may be) he will noe more assist us wth any of his shippes, nor doe wee desire it, but doe most humbly submit ourselves and condicon to his princely consideracon, and to the determination of the most hono^{ble} Privy Councell; my lord I understand by Coll^o Moryson that the import of 2^s 6^d hogs^{bd} is in danger of being taken from us. I have herewth sent your lord^p an acc^t of it, and doe hope you will think it well bestowed. I am sure lett those who speake ag^t it pretend what they will, it is wee pay it and not they, for whatever is layed upon tob^o they secure themselves of our necessities to save themselves, and upon pretense of such import doe advance much more upon the price of their goods & freight then they pay, yet I could wish there were another shilling layd upon it and that to be wholly employed in fortyfycations, wth would be a tax of wth the people would be less sensible then when it goes from them in Tob^o. The next thing the Bristoll men say is that they offered to build the fort at poynt comfort at their own charge, wth is a very malicious untruth, for soe farr are they and

all others from helping us that upon our proposall to the Yorke Masters that if they would carry 12 gunns to that river wee would mount them for theire defence, they demurred to it. Major Genⁿ Bennet (neer whose province this mischiefe fell) behaved himself very bravely in the defence of the shore, and the shipps wthin his two parts of w^{ch} none miscarried. My lord should I say all I can on this sad subject I should extend this beyond the bounds of a letter, w^{ch} is but too long allreddy. I shall therefore say noe more att present, but most humbly beg your Lord^{ps} protection in this distresse, w^{ch} I durst not doe did I not know innocent of all crimes but misfortune, w^{ch} is not in the power of any vertue or prudence att all times to prevent, and if I have but the good fortune to appeare soe to your honour I shall not dispaire (from my former experience of your goodness) of liveing still in your favour w^{ch} is all the happiness I wish for in this world, and in returne of it shall forever pray that you may be as happy here as your owne wishes can make you, and eternally soe hereafter.

I am Right Hono^{ble} yo'r Honors most humble and most obed^t servant.

THO: LUDWELL.

[Indorsed.] June 24, 1667.

Virg^a June 24 1667.

Right Hono^{ble}

My last by Capt. Gillam comand^r of the Colchester catch was to pay you my acknouledgements for your many obliging favors and to informe your hounor of the time the fleet in these parts would sayle, and where they would expect a convoy from his ma^{tye} to carry them into safety, but my Lord, that letter was not long gon from hence when the dutch wth 5 men of warr fell in upon us and by taking and burning the King's frigatt and about 20 sayle of merch^t shipps (of w^{ch} they carried away about 13 and burnt the rest), have given me but too sad an occasion of wrighting this and too much greife & distraccon to wright anything as I ought. I shall therefore (wth yo'r lo^{ps} pardon) referr you to our declaration for ye p^ticulars of our misfortune and most humbly beseech your Lord^p upon a serious peruseall of it,

to believe that there is not an untruth in it, and then I doubt not but you will conclude us only unhappy, and for the Gover^rs sake (whose pr'sent condicon is the saddest that ever I saw, and would I beleive moove his enemys to compassion were they present), I humbly hope your hounor will endeavor to give the King & the Councell the same impression of us; my lord for all other complaints ye merch^{ts} & seamen shall make ag^t us will be false & malicious; only these two poynts will seem to touch us wth likely hood of a fault (viz) the not building a fort at poynt comfort and the losse of the King's shipp. For the first, it is still the concurrent opinion of the whole country and of many of the most judicious seamen that it cannot hinder shippes from comeing into James river unlesse it were so great and apparrell'd wth soe many gunns as neither our meanes nor abillities could comply wth, for the foundation will beare neither brick nor stone unless it were first well piled wth to doe wee have neither the skill nor instruments, and for building wth timber, your hounor will find in our declaration (w^{ch} I herewith send you) the charge wee have allreddy been att to bring a litle of it in place, nor had wee (till his ma^{ty} was pleased to send us ten) above 14 gunns 8 of w^{ch} are very small and some of them and the rest of the biggest so skald and honycombd that its doubtedt upon trial they will breake, wth w^{ch} if our Lords^p shall please to consider the extreame poverty of ye country unable to supply theire owne necessities and to pay such taxes as may be equall to such fortifications and the deffence of them, you will (I doubt not) beleieve us in great distresse, and that you may the better Judge of our abillities be please to consider our pr'sent condicon, wherein twelve hundr^d pounds of tob^o is the medium of men's yearely cropps and a halfe peny p £ is certainly the full medium of the price Given for it, w^{ch} is finely skilt [cut?]: out of w^{ch} when those taxes and all others necessary for ye support of ye Govern^{mt} shall be deducted a very little will remain to a poor man who hath perhaps a wife and children to cloath and other necessities to buy, and truly soe much too little that I Can attribute it to nothing but the great mercy of God, theire loyalty to the King and theire affections to the Gover^r (w^{ch} are extraordinary) that keeps them from mutiny and confusion, nor will the merch^{ts} here nor masters of shippes contribute anything to theire owne deffence, supposing

they have sufficiently acquitted themselves in that poynt by paying Castle duties, w^{ch} as Coll^o Moryson can well inform you, never amounted to above 300^l a yeare and many yeares to much lesse, w^{ch} will goe but a little way towards building and defending forts to w^{ch} that your lord^p may give the more credit, I will assure you that the Assembly ord^red the Gover^r a guard of 20 foot and allowed them 2000^l of tob^o each man yearly to w^{ch} the Gover^r added out of his owne estate 1000 and theire taxes, dyet and lodging, all w^{ch} was not encouragement enough to make the guard ever yet exceed ten who voluntarily offered themselves. What charge then I beseech you will a garison at poynt comfort bee w^{ch} can not be lesse then 40 besides officers; a place soe barren that theire labour upon it will not produce them bred nor is there any good water upon the island, nor is it of any certaine defence for James River, or any att all to the rest of the rivers in the country where wee must be every yeare exposed to the like hazard of losse of shippes and reputation; now my lord for the unhappy losse of the frigatt I hope it will appeare (even by our pr^t sent misfortune) that the sending one or two for the guarding our coast was necessarie, but that this w^{ch} is here unfortunately lost should come in like a wreck noe man could fore see nor I believe pr^vent. The truth is had shee been brought higher up the river she had been saved, but then shee had rode soe inconvenient for her mast and other necessities as in likelihood shee would not have been redy to sayle wth the fleet, soe farr was shee from being able to lye of att the cape to guard the whole country w^{ch} was that the King designed and wee desired her for, and was the reason shee lay below for the speedier dispatch which shews us the weaknesse of human wisdom for whilst wee * * * a shipp or 2 of the King for our security as placing our surest defence in force of that nature, it pleased God to send that in (w^{ch} was designed for us) so bruised and disabled by storms as not to afford us that protection wee hoped from it, and whilst wee layd her in a place most convenient for her speedier repayre wee lost her and neer 20 more, who had not been soe much in an enemy's way but upon confidence of the frigatt's protection, and yet soe negligent were the masters as to anchor theire shippes at least 3 leagues below her when they * to have been as farr above her, and then though shee had been lost they

had been all saved by running up James river to ye towne where wee had planted those gunns the King sent us; my lord I shall say noe more of our Gen^l misfortune wth yet may be much increased if the King in his displeasure shall incline his eare to those who (taking this advantage of our unhappiness) may by proposing fortifications and other 'defence att their owne charge obtaine of his ma^{ty} either a propriety over us or reduce us under a company (a condicon very contrary to the wishes and affections of this country), to wth they are the more exposed whilst the Gover^r grieved for theirs & his owne misfortune and impatient of this first cheque to the happy course of his government, is resolved (against all oure entreaties and wth the hazard of his reputation wth must suffer much in this conjuncture) to sollicite the King by your lord^p and my lord Arlington, to displace him, and (by sending in another Gover^r) to provide for the future better governm^t of this place, to pr[']vent wth misfortune I have by the comand of the Councell sent your lord^p a letter under all our hands directed to the King and doe in their name most humbly beseech you to deliver it, and to enforce ours wth your owne petition for continuance amongst & over us, for wth you will not only receive the reward wth good actions are in themselves but will forever engage all our prayers & vows for your happinesse & prosperity. I doe therefore againe most humbly beseech you to consider that designe of his as an effort of his passion wth deprives him of the due consideration of what he owes to his owne fortune and reputation and to the future happinesse and welfare of this poor country; and now my lord I think it time (wth your hounor's patience) to say something for my selfe because I cannot but justly feare (since I wrote last yeare ag^t a fort att poynt comfort and for a frigate) that our pr[']sent misfortune will have a more then ordinary influence upon me for the pr[']vention whereof I can only say that what then was the truth of mine opinion and is still not only mine but the whole countries, and consequently can (at the most) be but argued guilty of erring wth them, w^{ch} yet I hope will not be soe understood when our reasons are considered, yet my lord how innocent soever I may bee, I would most humbly beg your protection had I any meritts to warrant my peticon but such as the poor beggar who asks an almes, but since it was your goodness wth placed me here

(hoping I have done nothing wth may cause your repentance of that favour) I will not dispaire of the same goodness to pr'tect me ag^t the attempts of such enemies as in this publique employ I may have unwittingly have made, but if I be so unfortunate as to find noe harbour in this storme and consequently shall make shipwreck of my fortunes, I will practice Seneca's good lesson Dum fortuna manet laudo manentem sed si quatit selevs penas resigno qua dedit et mea ne virtute involvo, though I may be deprived of my place and reputacon yet nothing shall rob me of my loyalty to my prince, mine innocency nor the resolution of praying for your lord^{ps} continuall happinesse and prosperity, as being by infinite obligations

Right Hono'ble yo^r honors most humble and obed^t servant,

(Signed)

THO: LUDWELL.

To the kings most sacred Ma^{tie} and ye Lords of his most hon^u Privy Councell.

The Governo^r and Councell of his Ma^{ties} Colony of Virg^a.
In all humility present.

That foure states men of warr of Holland of thirty-eight, Thirty-foure, twenty-foure and eighteen gunns and a dogger Boate of eight gunns under ye command of Abraham Crimson their Admirall, some time in May last intending an Invasion upon this country, Did on their Voiage heither take a shallop bound from hence to Cape-fere, by whose men they informed themselves of the condicon and posture of ye Marchants shippes here, and that there was one of yo^r Ma^{ties} shippes of forty-six gunns lay at anchor at Nuporte Nuse in James River, But so disabled in her mast, and Leaky in her Hull, as that she could not keep the sea; upon wth advice they stood in and on Saturday ye first of June, attacqued a shipp of London bound from Tangeer hither. The master Robert Conaway fought them very well two howers, but at last being wounded himself and overpowered with men, was taken by them neare our Capes, where they anchored Sunday & Munday to fitt their dogger-Boate and ye Shallop they had taken for firing the frigatt, and on Tusday ye fourth, they stood into the Bay and anchored againe till Wednesday morning, when they weighed and wth a faire Easterly winde stood into

James River with English Collo^r and passed by about twenty sayle of Marchant shippes (who lay there expecting ye rest of the Fleete and ready to sayle on the 24th according to yo^r Maties Comand) hayled them in English & sang their soundings in ye same language & sayling directly up to the frigatt w^{ch} lay about three leagus above, upon which they passed three broadsides & Boarding her without any resistance, became masters of her, the Captaine & the rest of the officers wth all her men except about thirty (who were on Board wth the Boatswaine fitting the rigging) being on shoare in severall places, busily employed for her speedier fitting out to the Capes, w^{ch} we beleewe would have beene effected in foure or five daies, and soe to our unspeakeable griefe yo^r Ma^{ty} lost yo^r shipp and wee the defence we expected from her immediately upon w^{ch} misfortune the Dutch made themselves masters of all those Merch^t shippes lying below them, who were in soe strange a security, that though many of them had winde & time enough to have run into Elizabeth River for safety yet none of them did it, but all became a prey to the enemy, and hence ariseth the cause of our grief & feare of your Ma^{ties} & your most Hon^{ble} Councells displeasure for suffering a loss w^{ch} though it was not in oure power to prevent, wee had undoubtedly repaired had the seamen Complied with the courage and chearfullness of the Planters of whome wee had in James River and in Yorke above twelve hundred ready to embarque on twelve shippes, press'd for the speedy engagement of the enemie, but except Cap^t Lightfoote, who very passionately resolved to hazard himself in the Admirall wth the Governor, and the rest of his Company in severall shippes and very cheerfully & voluntarily offered themselves to serve yo^r Ma^{ty} & some few of the Yorke Masters, so cowardly unwilling were the rest of the seamen, that neither the glory of the action nor the proffitt of it, nor the Governors resolution of leading them, (though against the opinion & desires of the Councell) nor the Company of many of the Councell & other Gentlemen of the Country, nor security given them for all damages which they should receive in their p^rsons shippes or goods, nor the certainty of the enemies weakness, being in all his fleete not above foure hundred men & boys, & many of them sick of w^{ch} wee were informed by some Planters taken and sent ashoare againe, could induce them to serve yo^r Ma^{ty} & the

Country in that service, w^{ch} yet they did not positively deny; but used such delayes, that in foure daies time with all our diligence, wee could not get those in Yorke (w^{ch} were nine good shipps) so ready as Gilbert in James River was in ten houres, and so to our grief and their shame the enemy after five daies stay in James River, sailed off wth his prizes without a blow, having first burnt five or six of them, wanting men to sayle them, & wth them the Frigatt whose want of repaire or sayles (hers being all on shoare to be mended & they not daring to fetch them) wee suppose to be the reason why they burnt her, of whose gunns wee shall save two of Brass and about twenty seven of iron & some shott, their want of water caused them to make severall attempts upon the shoare where they met with such opposition as not to be able to get any or anything els of a farthing value, so much easier is it for us to guard the shoare then the shipps. But because many of the seamen doe say that had the Forte been built at Poynt Comfort on ye Rivers mouth, this mischeif had been prevented, wee have thought it our duty to give yo^r Ma^{ty} & yo^r most hon^{ble} Councell our reasons against that plan, and for a Forte at James toune w^{ch} wee hope will be soe satisfactory as to obtaine yo^r Gracious pardon for our not reposing our confidence in that place, nor daring to promise a security to the shipps riding under ye protection of it when fortified, as well as our means & abilities can doe it, ffor wee humbly hope y^t it will be granted that a forte cannot certainly prevent the passing of enemies shipps by it, unless they are first hindered by the difficulty of the channel and forced to sayle on severall courses and nearer the Forte, w^{ch} by that means may have time to play on them and possibly to sinke them, of all w^{ch} advantages this place has only one, w^{ch} is that a shipp must come within shott, but with a winde & a Tide may soone be out of it againe. Then wee humbly conceive that a Forte can be noe undoubted security to shipps. But where they may (by halling on shoare under it) give an enemy difficulty to haul them off againe, and consequently the forte time to ply its gunns on them for their prevention, w^{ch} in this place cannot bee don, secure from windes & shelves & at James Towne may, where wee cannot only laye then with the shoare, but can in much lesse time then an enemy can possibly come to it, beeing five or six hundred men to man both them and the Forte ag^t any such

attempt, wth advantage the other place denies us, being too neare the sea, and in a p^t of the country so thinly Inhabited that wee must either be at an insupportable charge to maintaine a constant Garrison equall to such hazards or mus have more time to bring men thither, then their safety who shall ride there can reasonably give us, nor doth it afford either provisions or water wthin any convenient distance, and is all the summer time so infested wth musgetos & other troublesome flyes, that it will be impossible for men to live there, nor hath it that convenience for loading of shippes wth James towne hath, wth is neare the middle of the River, & lyes equally convenient to both the extreames, & hath great commodity either of Brick, Turf or Mudd to fortifie wth all, whereas on the other place being of a very loose sandy foundacon there is no possibility of building wth anything but Timber, wth must bee brought thither at an excessive charge as wee have already found by experience. It costing us above sixty thousand pounds of Tobacco the last year to bring not half enough to build a forte for foureteene gunns, wth were all wee had till yo^r ma^{tye} was graciously pleased to send us ten more, & of those foureteene wee feare many will prove unserviceable being much scaled & honycom^{bd} by lying above thirty yeares in the salt-sands, wee have many reasons more for the one & against the other place, but shall at present wth yo^r ma^{ties} & yo^r most Hon^{ble} Councello^{rs} p^rmission, least wee seame too troublesome. And since yo^r ma^{ties} command is in Gen^l tearmes to doe our utmost for the defence of those shippes which Trade to Virg^a, wee doe most humbly beseech yo^r ma^{tye} & yo^r most Hon^{ble} Councell to consider this Country as a place flatt and open, full of great Rivers, and then wee doubt not but yo^r will Graciously conclude in our favour, that though James River were soe fortified as an enemy could not come into it, yet this were no security to the Rivers of Yorke, Rappahannock Pianketanke, Wicomico & Potomack nor the two Ports on the Eastern side of the Bay, into every of wth places there are neare as many shippes brought as into James River, & into some of them more, at least of more considerable burdens, so that (whilst we are unable to fortify all of those places) if the shippes shall be forced all to ride in James River then this inconvenience will arise to ye Inhabitatione of those more northerly pt^s, that if they

come (for their supplies to lay out their tobacco in James River) the mar^{nt} will not deale with them, because theire pay lyes so farr from him, or if he doth, it must certainly be at a very low rate, since he ordinarily allows not much above a farthing for y^t w^{ch} ye Planter brings to his doore. And if there shall be any amongst us who may be able to shipp his tobacco on his owne acc^t it must be at such a rate, as ye tobacco will never repaye him, since they are already enforced to pay from twelve pounds to seaventeene pounds ~~7~~⁷ tunn freight, w^{ch} usually was but at seaven pound, & consequently ye trade of those remoter pt^s will be wholly lost, yo^r ma^{tie} will loose yo^r customes, and yo^r poore subjects be left without supplies, nor can wee propose any remedy for these difficulties but opposing men of warr to o^r enemies, w^{ch} wee are but too much afraid yo^r ma^{tie} (from ye late unhappy successe of yo^r first designe of that nature) will not be inclined to doe, nor dare wee again solicit you to it, but leaving our present conditon to yo^r Princely consideraton shall humbly begg yo^r ma^{ties} & yo^r most Hon^{ble} Councells patience, whilst wee returne to say something in our defence against ye complaint which may be made against us by those who have lost their shipp^s & goods in this most unfortunate attempt, many of w^{ch} were shipp^s Trading into the Northerne pt^s of this Colony, and voluntarily, & wthout any order from this government, quitted the place where they loaded & brought themselves to an anchor where they were taken, nor did any of the masters ever apply themselves to ye Governor for his orders to put themselves into places of more security, nor was it possible for the Frigett to secure them because they roade three leagues nearer the sea than Shee, and many of them weighed their anchors & stood up to her, with the Dutchman, & thereby rather helped to betray her, then to give her any advise of the approaching danger, nor did any of them keep a Boate off to sea, w^{ch} by Conaways fight wth ye enemy might have advised them in time to have avoided all ye misfortune fallen on them & us, w^{ch} (wee humbly hope) will be sufficient to lay the blame of their losse wholly to their owne neglect, & if wee shall be so unhappy as to find yo^r ma^{tie} displeased y^t yo^r shipp was suffered to ride in a place so exposed to ye danger of an enemy; wee most humbly beseech you to consider y^t the reason of it was for the convenience of taking in

a new main mast, & the speedier being fitted for the Guard of our Coasts, & such forwardness was shee in that wee are very confident foure or five daies would have put her to sea and would have pr'vented all our misfortune of wth wee shall say noe more at present. But because wee know yo^r ma^{ties} justice doth expect from us only what is possible for us to doe & not what the necessity of our condicon requires, wee doe in all humility beseech yo^r ma^{tie} to consider us as a people pressed at our backes wth Indians, in our bowells wth our servants & poverty (brought on us by the hard dealing of those whome wee are bound to defend) and invaded from wthout by the Dutch, & consequently not able to fortifie all those places where shippes use to Trade in this country & the more unable because wee are not only deprived of the time wee had designed for that worke by the Lo^d Baltimore* making void of the cessation from planting, but robbed of all future hopes of the advancement of our Commodity, and upon the sume of all that we have here pr'sented, wee doe most humbly pray yo^r ma^{tie} & yo^r most Hon^{ble} Councell to consider y^t though it be much in o^r power to keepe ourselves innocent from sinnes & vices, yet from misfortunes noe virtue, no prudence can alwaies secure us, and may God & yo^r ma^{ties} Clemency incline you to look on us, as only unfortunate and to receive us into your Princely favour and protection, and for a reward of soe much goodness, God soe blesse you as that you may manage this Warr wth Victory over all yo^r enemies, and end it with Triumph and Peace, wth wee heartily pray may never depart from you till you are possest of that everlasting glory and happiness which noe time nor accident can robb you off.

yo^r ma^{ties} most humble and

most loyall servants and subjects.

(Signed)

Will: Berkeley,	
Tho: Ludwell,	Ri: Bennett,
Robt. Smith,	Ab: Wood,
Tho: Swann,	Nathaniel Bacon,
Thomas Stegge,	John Carter,
Edward Carter,	Geo: Reade,
Theodo: Bland,	Augustine Warner.